First Vanuatu-China Youth Dialogue held via video link

By Quanjiao Wang (People's Daily Online) 11:16, May 17, 2021

SYDNEY, May 13 (People's Daily Online) With the theme of "Youth Contribution to China-Vanuatu Friendship and Addressing Climate Change", the first ever Vanuatu-China Youth Dialogue was held via video link on May 12.

The Dialogue was co-sponsored by the Vanuatu Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (MOYSD), the Vanuatu-China Friendship Association (VCFA), the Chinese Embassy in Vanuatu, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), along with the School of International Studies of Peking University. Participants discussed Vanuatu-China relations and climate change-related issues, exploring ways for the younger generation to contribute their efforts to tackling the challenge.

First Vanuatu-China Youth Dialogue held via video link (Photo provided by the Chinese Embassy in Vanuatu)

MOYSD Director General Henry Vira said, "Climate change over the past few decades has created a hugely negative impact on human development throughout Vanuatu and other similarly Small Island Developing States. The Vanuatu Ministry of Youth and Sports Development has participated in numerous national, regional and international dialogues on climate-related issues and agrees that the social, environmental and economic costs of such diverse weather patterns is huge." He commended the tremendous steps that China has taken in addressing climate change issues and called for bilateral dialogue with the government of China.

Director General Eslin Garaebiti of the Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change shared Vanuatu's experiences in dealing with the impacts of climate change and the current efforts that the Vanuatu government is undertaking to address climate change in the country. Garaebiti believes that the dialogue "gives an opportunity to our young people to be able to engage and learn from China's experience in its efforts to fight against climate change."

Chinese Ambassador Zhou Haicheng said: "This is the first time for outstanding young people from China and Vanuatu to conduct a bilateral dialogue and to discuss climate change. This is also the first time that China and Vanuatu have had an in-depth exchange on promoting the younger generation's contribution to addressing climate change. It is of historic significance."

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Climate change is a common challenge for all countries. China has always been a participant, contributor and trailblazer in global efforts for ecological conservation. China supports Pacific island countries' endeavors to transform their development mode and adopt a green, low-carbon and innovative path to tackle climate change at its core. Zhou emphasized, "As the most energetic group, young people should participate in the battle against climate change actively and play a more important role in ecological protection and climate action. The responsibility to carry forward China-Vanuatu friendship and cooperation is on your shoulders."

CPAFFC Vice President Jiang Jiang said, China has been actively involved in avenues for international climate cooperation, and has supported the United Nations and other international organizations in playing their respective roles effectively to achieve sustainable development goals in response to climate change. This online exchange can be the start of many more future dialogues and collaborations among young people on climate change and other issues, which will make them the backbone for the future development of our bilateral relations.

After intensive discussions, youth representatives reached a consensus that both China and Vanuatu are now suffering from the negative impacts of climate change. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has added to the difficulties associated with economic and social development across countries. The international community needs to muster unprecedented ambition and action to act with a sense of responsibility and unity, and work together towards fostering a harmonious community of life for both humans and Nature.

The youth representatives agreed to express their expectations and wishes to the upcoming COP26 scheduled to take place in November 2021. They hope that COP26 will listen to the appeal from the younger generation and they call on all young people to be active champions, participants and promoters of climate efforts.

(Web editor: Hongyu, Liang Jun)

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